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## A COMPOSITION FOCUSED PERSPECTIVE OF ELT TEACHER PREPAREDNESS IN TURKEY

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### ABSTRACT

*In this study, the process of ELT teacher education in Turkey was looked at from a composition studies focused lens. This study utilizes a qualitative case study approach, where the cases include university curricula and syllabi alongside a review existing literature. It was found that English composition education in Turkey has two major deficiencies with regard to teacher training. One, is the fact that its teacher selection mechanisms are not sufficient for foreign language teachers. The second is that after completion of the teaching program, even those candidates that score a high enough score in the KPSS to secure teaching placement, haven't proved themselves in the core competencies to be an English teacher in particular. A proposal was put forward that suggested a written examination/examination portion as part of the existing teacher assessment and evaluation (TAE) infrastructure, or as part of a revamped TAE infrastructure.*

## INTRODUCTION

Turkey also presents a very interesting study within English education broadly, as it is an area where the national educational policy has focused on from the K-12 level all the way to the university one. There has been a considerable amount of work done on this topic specifically by the ELT (English Language Teaching) scholarship in the country (i.e., Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe (2005), Koksal and Ulum (2018), various works by Kirkgoz (2008, 2016), Saricoban and Saricoban (2012). Whilst this is a lengthy topic, it is important to see how things evolved to where they are today especially in the context of composition education whose topic this paper will be centered on.

When studying composition education and its respective aims and goals in any context, it's easy to become fixated on the curricular elements or, as is the most apparent element, the respective results. Yet, it is equally obvious that ultimately, composition instruction is delivered through the teachers, and thus, their training and competency holds an extremely important role. Every nation has its own requirements, and Turkey is no exception. To date, whilst there has been a great deal of study relating to different aspects of English education in Turkey at the K-12 and university level, there hasn't been a thesis level study to do with just composition education. Most of the work has to do with subsections of larger papers or focuses on either secondary education or tertiary level education (Altinmakas and Bayyurt (2019), Ata and Erturk (2019), Celik (2020), Kirmizi and Kirmizi (2015), Tanyer and Susoy (2019), Toprak and Yucel (2020), Uysal (2008).

In this study then, prospective teacher selection and their respective pedagogical instruction will be analyzed from a composition studies lens. Thereafter, a proposal will be introduced that targets teacher selection.

## METHODS

This study utilizes a qualitative case study approach, where the cases include university curricula and syllabi, alongside a review existing literature. Qualitative research "honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4). In inductive reasoning "we begin with specific observations and measures, begin to detect patterns and regularities, formulate some tentative hypotheses that we can explore, and finally end up developing some general conclusions or theories" (Trochim, 2020). Within qualitative research, there also exist several associated research designs, with one being the case study. The case study refers to the process of "closely studying individuals, small groups, or whole environments", to "help the researcher to identify new variables and questions for further research" (Lauer & Asher, 1988, p. 23). In the case of this paper, those data sources include university curricula, existing literature related to government policy, and so forth, to develop an analysis and recommendation on the said topic.

## THE PROCESS

Becoming an English teacher in Turkey is an endeavor that starts in high school. Of course, given the differentiation within the high school system in the country, these pathways are not all the same. Nonetheless, students in Turkey differ from students in places like the U.S., where major switching is a fluid and quick task generally speaking. The paper *Choosing Teaching as a Career: Motivations of Pre-service English Teachers in Turkey* is a phenomenal work that sheds more light into the matter. In summary, secondary students can elect to pursue a Foreign Language track during the second phase of their high school careers, at a normal secondary school. As the paper mentions

This selection might be considered as a turning point in a student's career because they can only prefer departments pertaining to their divisions of graduation while entering university.

In this respect, foreign language departments of universities can be preferred by those students who graduate from language divisions of secondary schools (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012, p. 128).

This is of course, not the only way. But for those students dedicated to becoming teachers even at this early stage, it does mean that even their secondary education is teacher preparatory.

### Testing

From this point, students move on to taking the “determine all” YKS exam, in the sense that it determines not only university choice, but also the student’s respective department of study. This exam consists of three parts, known as the “Core Competency Test (TYT) , Field Competency Test (AYT), and Language Competency Test (YDT)” (Atac, 2019, p. 24). The first part of this exam is mandatory. And the others are dependent on which Department the students want to pursue. In our case, these are generally, English Language Teaching (ELT) departments. The final part of these exams, the language competency test, is where one major distinction comes in. Students desiring to enter an English department must take a specific test related to English competency. This means that these students who will ultimately study English teaching going forward are already differentiated. Given that an effective teacher candidate can hardly be selected based on the results of one exam, this exam’s effectiveness is already suspect. Indeed, while “students are selected with their knowledge and proficiency of English, the content of the test items is generally limited to reading, grammar and vocabulary knowledge” (Ozturk & Aydin, 2019, p. 185). However, as far as writing is concerned, it was found that is the most neglected aspect in this major specific testing process (Sayin, & Aslan, 2016, p. 35).

Already, a problem can be observed. That is, teacher candidates are assessed on measures that aren’t necessarily the most objective. Teacher selection is a consequential issue (Atac, 2019). This differs from the models that successful countries on the PISA such as Finland, Singapore, and Korea employ, that in the Turkish model, teachers are screened *after* they have finished their education programs, and not before. This type of screening is far from being effective. Teaching itself is not necessarily a competitive profession in the country in which academic majors such as law and medicine followed by others take precedence in student preferences. Indeed, what can be seen is that the “rising generation with their high academical results does not have a desire to become teacher” (Atac, 2019, p. 26).

At the University

English teacher education from the point of entering university takes two forms. One, is the mainstream and most common teacher training pathway, and the other, represents an alternative pathway. To describe both, the first, is pursuing a degree in ELT (English Language Teaching), through one the fifty-seven programs relating to ELTE (English Language Teacher Education) (Atac, 2019). The other pathway was through attaining a “pedagogical formation certificate”, which, until recently, could be completed within one year until it was abolished in 2020 by YOK and the MoNE in favor of non-thesis masters programs (Akcort and Savasci 18). The pedagogical certificate allowed for those who did not complete an education program to still qualify to become teachers, for example in our case, prospective English teachers who completed degrees in a field like English or American Literature.

The KPSS

Both processes ultimately culminate in a final hurdle, which is the most significant aspect of the teacher education system in Turkey (as well as its entire civil service), and that is, the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS). The KPSS is a key exam for every public/civil employee in the

country, and as teacher's fall under that category in Turkey, so does this exam have relevance to them (although the pedagogical component is unique to only teaching candidates). This exam is a critical component of the qualifications and prospects for the future teacher who hopes to work in the state system. It is a multiple-choice exam, composed of three parts, those being general knowledge/general ability, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical and content knowledge (Atac, 2019). The parts can be described as follows (Kilickaya & Krajka, 2010, p. 254):

**Table 1.1** Components of the KPSS

<b>General knowledge and ability</b>	This section aims to measure candidates' knowledge and ability in the Turkish language and mathematics, testing the basics of the language and the basic maths skills.
<b>General Culture</b>	This section deals with the history of Turkey with a focus on the Principles of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, the geography of Turkey, Turkish Culture and Popular Topics.
<b>Educational Sciences</b>	This section measures pedagogical background, focusing on the general principles of learning and teaching, curriculum and instruction, guidance and counselling.

Prior to 2013, there was no content (subject area) assessment, although there were questions common to all candidates in different subject areas such as mathematics, English and biology (Kilickaya & Krajka, 2010, p. 254). This changed thereafter, and now, the subject area portion for ELT teachers contains 50 multiple choice questions which are basically divided into two sections, a subject knowledge test (consisting of language proficiency, linguistics, and literature) and a subject teaching test (Ciftci, 2017, p. 32). For teacher candidates, there is urgency in passing this exam, in that it is only offered once a year through a nationally administered procedure. After reaching a certain predetermined baseline score by the Ministry of National Education, teachers go on to a short interview, lasting only about ten minutes (Ozturk & Aydin, 2019, p. 187). In this interview, candidates are assessed by a series of questions consisting of "educational sciences, general culture, comprehending an issue and summarizing it, expression skill and reasoning skill; communication skills, self-confidence, persuasion skill; openness to scientific and technological improvements; representation ability in front of community and educational qualifications" (Atac, 2019). Crucially, this interview is conducted in Turkish, which presents another vital limitation, as well as a "lack of scoring rubrics and field experts" (Yesilcinar & Cakir, 2020, p. 1550). That interview does not have subject-specific questions, and in one study of ELT teaching candidates, it was found that an extremely high percentage of them were opposed to the relevance of the exam (Ciftci, 2017, p. 35).

As we can already see, Turkey is a nation where exams take utmost importance, and in our study of analyzing who will be the next composition educators for students, it can be seen that an English teacher's competency in any area of English, much less a specific area such as writing, plays no role in teacher selection. The KPSS, even in assessing general pedagogy - which is beyond the extent of this thesis, but still worth mentioning - fails. The exam is a very general exam that is taken by every prospective civil servant (teacher or not) and puts many questions as to its ultimate effectiveness. Indeed, for the KPSS, "candidates say that most of the information they get during the preparation process is based on memorizing and most of them are not useful for their future" (Ugulu & Yorek, 2015, p. 186). Ultimately, "candidates believe that this exam is far from choosing the right person and candidates with memorizing skills become successful and advanced" (Ugulu & Yorek, 2015, p. 187).

## ELT & COMPOSITION EDUCATION

The ELT (English Language Teaching) field is a significant part of the Turkish academic system at the tertiary level, and has made its own nation specific identity, crafted through Turkey's national exploration with English education in its unique geography. The majority of training for prospective

English instructors in Turkey takes place in these ELT departments situated in the education faculties of universities. In the programs, “the education normally takes four years unless the program entails one-year intensive English preparatory, in this case 1+4 years” (Karakas, 2012, p. 2). At the university level, much like the broader education level in Turkey, there have been numerous constant changes throughout the years, and one of the most significant for ELT Departments occurred in 2006. From these changes, “The components of the program comprise field knowledge (linguistic competence), teacher education (pedagogic competence), general knowledge and teaching practice” (Karakas, 2012, p. 2-3). ELT is the most significant pipeline through which English Teacher candidates graduate from.

The ELT curriculum

The curriculum of ELT programs in Turkey are standardized by the Council of Higher Education (YOK). This makes doing an analysis of the curriculum more straightforward, since there is one set curriculum which is available on the YOK website. Already, there has been some work done on curricular analysis relating to the ELT program (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010, Karakas, 2012, Sanli, 2009 etc). Through these analyses, a glimpse of the positive and negative aspects of the curriculum design, with regard to teacher training can be seen. However, to date, any type of writing or composition specific analysis hasn’t been done. This points to a new research direction addressing this deficiency.

The official curriculum is outlined in the Turkish language which I had translated (using the assistance of a translator), and describes broadly the aims and content of each course. This four-year course of study can be looked at, and within this curriculum, there are some courses in particular which pertain to writing training for instructors. These are highlighted in the following flowchart:

**Table 1.2** ELT Teacher Curriculum (İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans Programı)

<p><b>Semester I:</b>                  Introduction to Education                  Educational Sociology                  Atatürk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution 1                  Foreign Language 1                  Turkish Language 1                  information technologies                  Reading Skills 1  <b>Writing Skills 1</b>                  Listening and Pronunciation 1                  Oral Communication Skills 1</p>	<p><b>Semester II:</b>                  Education psychology                  Educational Philosophy                  Atatürk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution 2                  Foreign Language 2                  Turkish Language 2                  Reading Skills 2  <b>Writing Skills 2</b>                  Listening and Pronunciation 2                  Oral Communication Skills 2                  Structure of English</p>
<p><b>Semester III:</b>                  Instructional Technologies                  Teaching Principles and Methods                  Elective 1                  Elective 1                  Elective 1                  English Learning and Teaching Approaches                  English Literature 1                  Linguistics 1  <b>Critical Reading and Writing</b></p>	<p><b>Semester IV:</b>                  Turkish Education History                  Research Methods in Education                  Elective 2                  Elective 2                  Elective 2                  English Teaching Programs                  English Literature 2                  Linguistics 2                  Language Acquisition</p>
<p><b>Semester V:</b>                  Classroom Management                  Morals and Ethics in Education                  Elective 3                  Elective 3                  Elective 3                  Teaching Foreign Languages to Children 1                  Teaching English Language Skills 1                  Language and Literature Teaching 1</p>	<p><b>Semester VI:</b>                  Measurement and Evaluation in Education                  Turkish Education System and School Management                  Elective 4                  Elective 4                  Elective 4                  Teaching Foreign Languages to Children 2                  Teaching English Language Skills 2                  Language and Literature Teaching 2</p>

<b>Semester VII:</b> Teaching Practice 1 Special Education and Inclusion Elective 5 Community Service Practices Elective 5 Course Content Development in English Language Teaching Translation	<b>Semester VII:</b> Teaching Practice 2 Counseling in Schools Elective 6 Elective 6 Exam Preparation in English Language Teaching
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**Career Electives:** Open and Distance Learning, Child Psychology, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, Education Law, Anthropology of Education, History of Education, Drama in Education, Non-Program Activities in Education, Program Development in Education, Project Preparation in Education, Critical and Analytical Thinking, Education of Hospitalized Children, Inclusive Education, Character and Values Education, Comparative Education, Micro Teaching, Museum Education, Out-of-School Learning Environments, Learning Difficulty, Individualizing and Adapting Teaching, Sustainable Development and Education, Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

**ELT Electives:** Language and Society, World English and Culture, Pragmatics and Language Teaching, English Textbook Analysis, Drama in English Teaching, Material Design in English Teaching, New Approaches in English Teaching, English Vocabulary Teaching, English in Mass Communication, Assessment of In-Class Learning, Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching, Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching, Teaching Integrated Language Skills

The curriculum shows clearly that opportunities exist for prospective teachers to develop their writing skills explicitly. And there seem to be courses where implicit writing competencies can also be built, such as “Language and Literature Teaching” and so forth. The description of the explicit coursework directly related to pedagogical training (with their course objectives) can also be seen:

**Table 1.3** Description of Relevant Teacher Candidate Coursework (Translated into English from the YOK İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans Programı)

<b>Writing Skills 1</b>  Paragraph forms and structure; technical features of the paragraph; paragraph analysis; paragraph plan drawing; producing text with description, comparison, discussion, narration types, summary writing, interpretation; Writing short stories, reviews (on a book and / or film) and formal / informal letter.
<b>Writing Skills 2</b>  Reading to write, writing to be read; will be done before, during and after writing raising awareness about practices; rewriting by paraphrasing; the ability to review what you have written; self-evaluation of what you write; peer review; writing an essay and homework report.
<b>Critical Reading and Writing</b>  To be able to summarize and / or report by examining current studies selected from the field of English language education; to be able to examine studies within their own context and localize knowledge; comparing texts defending different views on the same subject and synthesizing them and producing their own original texts.

### Teacher Writing: An Analysis

There has been some work with regard to ELT curricular assessments, but nothing that analyzes the program of study for teaching candidates with regard to its successes and failures has yet been done, even broadly. Of course, such an initiative would have to be done at both the national as well as the university level, and is one recommendation I will expound upon later. However, in going through the current literature available, various issues can be reflected on to somewhat piece together potential writing issues amongst teacher candidates. In one study of ELT students at one highly-ranked university, it was found that the “majority of the participating prospective teachers of English had high and average anxiety”, suggesting what I see is a lack of exposure and formal, focused training in writing (Atay & Kurt, 2006, p. 110). This is evidenced by Kara (2013), who in her study of 150 ELT candidates at a major Turkish university found that they spoke of not having writing habits nor being

used to expressing themselves through writing given that in their previous education, they were familiar only with test-taking (Kara, 2013, p. 103). In another qualitative study analyzing the writing ability of ELT students (known as pre-service teachers), various sources of writing difficulty were found, being 1) student-based sources, 2) educational practices and tendencies and 3) lecturer-based sources. (Tanyer & Susoy, 2019, p. 26). These are particularly relevant for the purpose of this thesis, since they have direct relevance to ELT instruction and the curriculum itself. Elaborating on this:

The *student-based sources* were subcategorized into eight codes: 1a) demotivation, 1b) limited practice in and effort for L2 writing and reading, 1c) nervousness and fear, 1d) linguistic competence, 1e) class absenteeism, 1f) competency in writing, 1g) lack of planning/time management and 1h) attitudes towards lecturer. The *educational practices and tendencies* consisted of seven subcodes: 2a) language education before university, 2b) examination in classroom environment, 2c) rule-based, multifaceted nature of L2 writing, 2d) cultural and parental tendencies, 2e) late or imprecisely given feedback, 2f) unclear evaluation criteria and 2g) limited time for teaching/learning. The *lecturer-based sources*, on the other hand, were divided into three subcategories: 3a) lecturer attitude, 3b) lecturer's teaching characteristics and 3c) expectations of lecturers (Tanyer & Susoy, 2019, p. 37-38).

Whilst this study was limited, having a very small sample size, being constrained in context (only one university), and relying on student impressions of only one writing exam whose scores they received, it does point to numerous areas of further exploration that give direction for future research. For example, we see a multipronged set of issues, each that needs to be addressed in its own context, whilst still bearing on the larger context at hand. It also does fit the larger narrative of the difficulties of students' writing abilities at the university level (in the sense that due to low teacher writing competency, high school students are unprepared). That being said, this is ultimately only an extrapolation, and of course, causation cannot be implied without further and more concrete research.

### **Alternative Teacher Training Pathway: The Pedagogical Certificate**

Earlier in this chapter, the alternative route towards ELT training for prospective English teachers in the nation was briefly discussed. Formally, this is known as the "pedagogical formation certificate". These alternative teacher certification programs were created particularly in response to the severe teacher shortages of their day (very relevant also to ELT), namely, a lack of qualified education graduates. However, as the university system has greatly expanded, so has the supply of available teaching candidates. So much so in fact, that supply now greatly outpaces demand across all teaching areas, and ELT teachers are no exception (Aksoy, 2017). That said, the program has remained until only recently, and in its most recent structure, allowed for English majors to take this pedagogical certificate (which is not specific to English pedagogy), and qualify for English teaching (Taner, 2017).

In this case, we see a type of training very similar to the American training system, where the most common pathways for teachers of English is through an English B.A. program, followed by subsequent pedagogical training (whether through a Masters or certificate program). These teachers are bound to have more writing and analysis-based training, just given the nature of their programs. These programs also differ from education programs, like ELT, in the sense that they are less standardized amongst universities (there are no official curriculums on the YOK website as there are for teaching programs like ELT).

Unfortunately, there haven't been any major studies comparing the quality of the alternatively certified teachers versus graduates of ELT faculties. One measure that is available is the KPSS exam, in which both alternatively educated teachers and education graduates have been analyzed to have almost identical success rates and scores (Taner, 2017). However, this says nothing for teacher evaluation in that the KPSS is hardly a measure for this element at all, being a general civil service exam, that even non-teacher prospective government employees take. It can only be inferred that

these teachers would possess a much higher level of writing skill due to the nature of their training, *but* due to the lack of training in linguistic instruction, they would fall short in this area. And, as English writing competency does require a certain level of English competency on the part of the students, it's unlikely that their training would be a significant game changer for the students who are already struggling in language acquisition, as is the case in Turkey.

### TEACHER SELECTION: A PROPOSAL

Teacher selection in Turkey relies on a model that is heavily examination based, from the very beginning of the educational process all the way until the teachers begin their respective careers. Because of this significance, it's important to scrutinize this process. Teachers are the drivers of education, and ultimately, students are reliant on them to a large degree in their success.

In the report *How the world's best-performing schools systems come out on top*, Barber and Mourshed write about teacher selection in detail, and particularly how it relates to top-performing schools. They write that "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers". This makes sense both conceptually and practically, and when relating to composition, it is why writer teacher training and education is so important. Whilst the Barber and Mourshed report makes these points on a much larger scale and through looking at educational systems across countries broadly (through measures such as the Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA), I make the argument that the same issues also directly affect composition. This fits well within the Turkish context, since English teaching broadly (including composition) is truly (whether explicitly or implicitly) part of national policy.

According to Barber and Mourshed, two types of procedures exist regarding teacher selection throughout the world. The first model selects people before they start their teacher training and limits places in the training program to those who are selected (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). The second model leaves the selection process until after the prospective teachers have graduated from teacher training and then selects the best graduates to become teachers (Barber & Mourshed, 2007).

As the authors of the study write, the most successful educational systems are those that screen teachers through some variation of the first option. Turkey, however, falls under the second option, and is perhaps an example case study of what this would look like in terms of how much it is reliant on a single exam for teacher placement. Barber and Mourshed speaks of issues that are caused by the second option, such as an oversupply of teacher candidates, quality of educational experience, and turning teaching into a "low-status profession" (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). On the other hand, countries that use the first option (significantly Singapore and Finland) limit teacher entry from the very beginning, and tend to be extremely selective and ultimately, high status professions (Barber & Mourshed, 2007).

English education in Turkey has two major deficiencies with regard to teacher training. One, is the fact that its teacher selection mechanisms from the get-go aren't sufficient for foreign language teachers, in that their English is not assessed in a critical enough manner to determine teaching level proficiency. While the preparatory year addresses this somewhat, it is still insufficient given the high level of language needed for topics advanced level writing instruction down the road.

The second is that after completion of the teaching program, even those candidates that score a high enough score in the KPSS to secure teaching placement, haven't proved themselves in the core competencies to be an English teacher in particular (a written component would be a very important part of such an assessment). So, even in the absence of a teacher selection model that follows the evidence-based tenants for success (option one), the option two framework in place is flawed. Yesilcinar and Cakir (2020) speak in detail about the current teacher assessment and evaluation (TAE) model which is in place. As they see it, the current model is severely limited in many ways,



specifically in regard to equity, fairness, and effectiveness. In the paper, the authors mention that “the most problematic area of the current TAE model is its lack of performance-based scoring” (Yesilcinar & Cakir, 2020, p. 385). Thus, any solution must address this. In the paper, the authors propose an alternative model, one that intends to address the deficiencies in the existing one. This, in summary, is one “taking into account the prospective teachers’ teaching ability, their attitudes, and their personality traits” (Yesilcinar & Cakir, 2020, p. 384). From their recommendation, they propose “TOEFL- or IELTS-like exams” (Yesilcinar & Cakir, 2020, p. 385). This would be less dependent on a one-day, consequential exam, but “the use of candidates’ practicum scores and scores they get in certain courses or practices (e.g. micro-teaching of school experience, material development, and evaluation)” (Yesilcinar & Cakir, 2020, p. 385).

Here is where composition plays a large role: both the TOEFL and IELTS have significant writing portions built in, and are recognized as major tests for university admissions, and even elements such as career and national residency applications around the world. The importance of something like writing, of course, is contextual (someone applying for graduate study in mathematics would not be expected to possess the same score as a prospective student of the English language). However, for the advancement of English teachers expected to teach writing, the standard would definitely be high. This can occur in two-ways. Either the integration of a writing portion in the existing exams, or, the same within a completely revamped TAE system. The justification for this is already clear, in that students, according to the English national curriculum, are expected to be writing compositions at a certain predetermined (B2) level. Without vetting for teachers to see if they themselves possess the appropriate degree of writing contexts, it is unreasonable to expect students to do the same.

There is evidence that this endeavor, of using a different model of teacher selection that takes into account writing, can work. In a study by Llosa and Malone (2018) on students’ performance on TOEFL writing tasks versus that on actual academic writing tasks on 103 international (non-native) undergraduate students in the U.S., it was found that the TOEFL Writing section would be an effective tool for decisions regarding whether test takers would be prepared for university writing courses (Llosa & Malone, 2018, p. 254). As the authors mentioned, “performance on the TOEFL Writing section was found to be at least somewhat associated with all dimensions of writing quality in academic writing tasks in a required writing course, but it was most strongly associated with students’ grammatical and cohesive control in their writing and with the writing they can do in first drafts” (Llosa & Malone, 2018, p. 254). Given that this example tracked non-native students in academic writing coursework, there is an extrapolation that can be made to the Turkish context.

Composition and writing scholars do have vested interest in this topic, since ultimately, the secondary school students will come through the university system, and their writing education from that point on will be regulated to higher education. As composition scholars, we are trained precisely for this, and play significant roles in both the university education system itself, as well as the secondary to university bridge that occurs in the first year (or two) of university study. In this, these professionals should be part of assessment design and consultation, particularly regarding aspects such as essay prompts and fair grading practices.

## **CONCLUSION**

The process of becoming an English teacher in Turkey is a multi-step process that is based on a model of selection that is delayed until prospective teachers have graduated from teacher training. From this point, teachers take the KPSS examination, and their scores are consequential in determining their potential for placement. Turkey is a nation where exams take utmost importance, and as far as composition training is concerned, an English teacher’s competency in any area of English, much less a specific area such as writing, plays no role in teacher selection.

In that sense, a proposal was put forward that would include a written examination/examination portion as part of the existing TAE infrastructure, or as part of a revamped TAE infrastructure. This

system should include composition/writing practitioners and scholars as important stakeholders, in light of the fact that composition and writing scholars do have vested interest in this topic. This is because ultimately, the secondary school students will come through the university system, and their writing education from that point on will be regulated to higher education.

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